

Testing Variations of Maternal Immunization Messages

A collaboration between OES and HHS

What was the challenge?

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) wanted to strengthen maternal immunization programs and increase uptake of recommended vaccines among pregnant women. The National Vaccine Program Office (NVPO) developed a digital advertising campaign aimed at increasing site visits to Vaccines.gov, an informational website operated by NVPO. NVPO wanted to determine the relative effectiveness of different messaging to increase site visits.

What was the program change?

The Office of Evaluation Sciences (OES) worked with NVPO to craft variations of a Facebook ad that targeted pregnant Facebook users. Four variations of the ad were developed, in which the text and image both varied to focus on either the baby only, or the baby and expecting mom. The ad campaign ran for 18 days in November 2017.

How did the evaluation work?

Platform users were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions based on their zip code, in a two-by-two design which allowed for comparisons across each of the four groups, and across text variations or image variations.

What was the impact?

We did not observe any statistically significant differences in click-through rates between the ad variations.



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Clear Touchpoint	<i>HHS and NVPO developed a digital advertising campaign.</i>
Individual Action	<i>To go to the Vaccines.gov webpage on pregnancy, and increase pregnant women's awareness of recommended vaccines, and their intentions to vaccinate.</i>
Existing Data	<i>Platform ad data and Google Analytics webpage data on user behavior.</i>
Significant Population Size	<i>The ad campaign was designed to reach 1,000,000 impressions.</i>
Opportunity to Randomize	<i>Platform users were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions based on their zip code.</i>
Dedicated Agency POCs	<i>National Vaccine Program Office, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, Department of Health and Human Services</i>

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- Implementation challenges —
 - Target click-through rates rather than impressions (though that is more expensive)
 - Different terminology in the digital ad world was confusing to navigate at times — setting a target # of impressions, for example, may have misled the group away from what the comms contractor saw as a more effective campaign
 - We didn't get to see into the black box of targeting
- Google analytics provides some useful data, but has limitations (can't parse by location, not a meaningful action)
- We identified an interesting question to test, but this wasn't a good scenario to test it in (because of the low click rates)
- Similar ad campaigns may consider targeting click-through-rate rather than impressions